

the United States of America, a fact like this can become a subject of inquiry, and a criminal inquiry too, as an offense

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against religion; that a question about the sale of a book can be carried before the civil magistrate. Is. this then our freedom of religion? And are we to have a censor whose imprimatur shall say what books may be sold, and what we may buy? And who is thus to dogmatize religious opinions for our citizens? Whose foot is to be the measure to which ours are all to be cut or stretched? Is a priest to be our inquisitor, or shall a layman simple as ourselves, set up his reason as the rule for what we are to read, and what we must believe? It is an insult to our citizens to question whether they are rational beings or not, and blasphemy against religion to suppose it cannot stand the test of truth and reason. If M. de Becourt's book be false in its facts, disprove them; if false in its reasoning, refute it. But, for God's sake, let us freely hear both sides, if we choose. (To M. Dufief, 1814. C. VI., 340.)

RELIGION OF JEFFERSON.—But while this syllabus is meant to place the character of Jesus in its true and high light, as no impostor himself, but a great reformer of the Hebrew code of religion, it is not to> be understood that I am with him in all his doctrines. I am a Materialist; he takes the side of Spiritualism; he preaches the efficacy of repentance towards forgiveness of sin; I require a counterpoise of good works to redeem it, etc., etc. It is the innocence of his character, the purity and sublimity of his moral precepts, the eloquence of his inculcations, the beauty of his apalogues in which he conveys them, that I do so much admire; sometimes, indeed, needing indulgence to eastern hyperbolism. My eulogies, too, may be found on a postulate which may not be ready to grant. Among the sayings and discourses imputed to him by his biographers, I find many passages of fine imaginations, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others, again, of so much ignorance, of so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being. I separate, therefore, the gold from the

dross; restore to him the